

March 23, 2000

TCO and Gulf submit Natural Gas Star results to EPA

Every day field forces from Columbia Gas and Columbia Gulf pore over the transmission segment's 16,700 miles of pipelines, dozens of compressors and hundreds of metering stations, to efficiently maintain and operate the system. But, in a very real sense, what they are doing is akin to planting acres of trees or removing polluting vehicles from highways.

As a partner in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Natural Gas Star program, Columbia's transmission segment has filed its first report with the EPA on methane reduction under the Natural Gas Star program. Since 1993, the transmission segment has reduced methane emissions released to the atmosphere by 9,715,648 Mcf. This is equivalent to the annual carbon dioxide uptake of 1,175,593 acres of trees or the equivalent of taking 864,695 cars off the road for one year.

"I'd like to thank all of those employees who helped us to achieve these results and pull together this report for EPA. It took a great deal of creativity and work to develop these measures and calculate the associated emission reductions," said Steve Wilner, vice president, Environmental, Health and Safety.

Methane is one of the so-called greenhouse gases believed to contribute to global warming, so reductions are beneficial to the environment. The top transmission segment methane reduction measures reported to EPA include:

Measure Emission Reduction 1993 to 1999 (Mcf)

TCO: Directed inspection and maintenance at compressor stations. 6,652,660

Gulf: Use portable compressor to degas pipelines before maintenance. 1,082,424

Gulf: Directed inspection and maintenance at compressor stations. 657,580

TCO: Directed inspection and maintenance at meter stations. 221,396

Gulf: Identify and rehabilitate defective and leaky transmission pipe. 213,800

TCO: Replacement of high-bleed pneumatic devices. 174,592

TCO: Install new compressor engines with dry seals. 146,549

Gulf: Redesign blowdown system and alter emergency shutdown (ESD) practices 120,000

TCO and Gulf's efforts in 2000 under the Natural Gas Star program will involve developing an internal program to collect and confirm emission reduction information for current and future measures, spreading best management practices, finding new measures and beginning a greenhouse gas inventory program for the company.

If you have any ideas on how the company can cost-effectively reduce methane emissions under this program in the future, please contact Lisa Carter, TCO and Gulf's Natural Gas Star manager at (703) 227-3320. If you would like more detail on TCO and Gulf's 1999 report to EPA or on the Natural Gas Star program in general, please visit the EH&S web site on the transmission segment Intranet.